

Remarks

Per the above amendment, claims 1, 4, 11, 20 and 23 of the pending claims have been amended. In addition, claims 3 and 22 have been canceled.

The amendment to claims 1 and 20 now specifically point out that the collar and needle sheath each have an engage mechanism, at the inner circumferential surface of the collar and at the outer circumferential surface of the needle sheath, so that when the needle sheath is fitted to the collar, the engage mechanisms would fit to each other so that only one side of the proximal portion of the needle sheath is in contact with the collar and the needle sheath itself is not in contact with the needle hub.

The prior art does not disclose such construction insofar as Kobayashi (US 6,719,737) only discloses that the needle protector 70 is seated onto the seating surface 69 of collar 50 (column 7, lines 42-54). Kobayashi does not disclose that there are engage mechanisms provided at the collar and the needle sheath that would fit to each other when the needle sheath is fitted to the collar. As disclosed, needle protector 70 is mounted on the seating region 69 of the Kobayashi device. That being the case, the end portion of the needle protector 70, as well as the inside surface at the open end of the needle protector 70, are both in contact with collar 50. In contrast, for the instant invention device, only one side of the proximal portion of the needle sheath is in contact with the collar.

Kobayashi does not disclose anything remotely similar to the needle hub as set forth in claim 11.

In light of the above amendment, it is respectfully submitted that the claims pending in this application are patentably distinguishable over the prior art. Allowance of the instant application is therefore respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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